



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Adult Protective Services
Protecting with
Purpose, Passion and Persistence
Strategic Plan FY19-23



TEXAS

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

OUR MISSION

To protect older adults and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

OUR VISION

Protecting with Purpose, Passion, and Persistence.

OUR CORE VALUES

We champion the SAFETY and DIGNITY of vulnerable adults.

We conduct ourselves with INTEGRITY.

We demonstrate RESPECT for all persons.

We COLLABORATE to improve outcomes.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER

To APS and the DFPS Family:

Last year Adult Protective Services released our first strategic plan. The strategic plan helped to clarify our work and the overall direction of the organization. As I mentioned last year, our strategic plan is a living document. It will continue to change as the APS program identifies the best way forward. This requires constant focus on reviewing processes, correcting inefficiencies, and adapting to change.

The planning process provides us an extraordinary opportunity to reflect on the past, to acknowledge our successes, and to look to the future. Once again, APS leadership met for a two day work session in September to review and revise our program strategic plan. When APS changed from a “business plan” to a strategic planning approach in 2017, the focus shifted to a long-term plan with broader vision and goals. By striving for thoughtful, planned improvement and progress, APS is positioned to be proactive rather than reactive.

The strategic plan provides a framework to capture the program’s efforts and define our future. This year, we took our first opportunity to evaluate our strategic plan and review our progress. In our review process, we gathered survey feedback from caseworkers and field staff and input from various APS employees. My frank discussions with Program Administrators and District Directors and conversations I have held during my visits to the field with staff across the state also supported our review process. Based on feedback from the field, we have revised the strategic plan to reflect our current status. Our long term goals remain the same. Some of our objectives and strategies have been modified, extended, or closed based on our experience over the past year.

One of the most powerful moments during the Strategic Planning session occurred when every participant made a list of accomplishments from the past year. The result of that exercise was a literal wall of successes. It included everything from regional progress towards target zones all the way to the completion of the LAR process with a request for APS pay parity. As we continually strive for improvement, it is energizing to take a few minutes to celebrate our success.

The trajectory of this plan is inspiring as it offers a glimpse into the potential for our program. It provides us with strategies to showcase and acknowledge our tremendously talented pool of employees. I am very much looking forward to working in partnership with all of you as we continue to strive to improve our program and our ability to protect the most vulnerable citizens of this great state.

I invite you to peruse the plan and share in our excitement about the next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kezeli Wold', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kezeli Wold

Associate Commissioner

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Introduction

The strategic plan is a document intended for Adult Protective Services (APS) staff and program partners to understand the direction APS is heading. As the aging population in Texas continues to grow, APS staff recognizes the need for a plan that is responsive to the current environment, resources, and issues facing Texans. The plan incorporates feedback from District Directors, Program Administrators, state office leadership, state office staff, and staff across the entire APS program. Internal planning has helped APS identify where to focus program effort as we move forward.

Last year, APS leadership instituted a business plan that was the result of several years of planning and internal assessment that helped determine where to focus effort. The new business model, with a five year strategic planning timeframe and annual reevaluation, allows for a comprehensive plan that includes wide-ranging goals and longer time frames to optimize the quality of objective outcomes.

Annual reevaluation of the strategic plan is important for the purposes of accountability, transparency and improvement. Reevaluation provides an opportunity to assess additional opportunities for APS and partners to work together to protect vulnerable adults and to alleviate risk of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation in the population we serve.

To set the stage for the strategic plan, a brief program overview is provided that includes current APS financial and human resources data as well as information on populations the program serves. This is followed by a summary of the results of a strengths and weaknesses analysis conducted across APS statewide to support the development of the strategic plan. The document concludes with a summary of the 2019-2023 APS Strategic Plan.

Program Overview

Purpose and Population Served

The Adult Protective Services (APS) division, within the Department of Family and Protective Services, is responsible for protecting older adults and people with disabilities in Texas from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

APS clients are:

- Reported to have been abused, neglected or exploited
- Age 65 and older or age 18 to 65 with a disabling condition
- Reside in the community (e.g., private homes, adult foster homes, unlicensed board care homes)

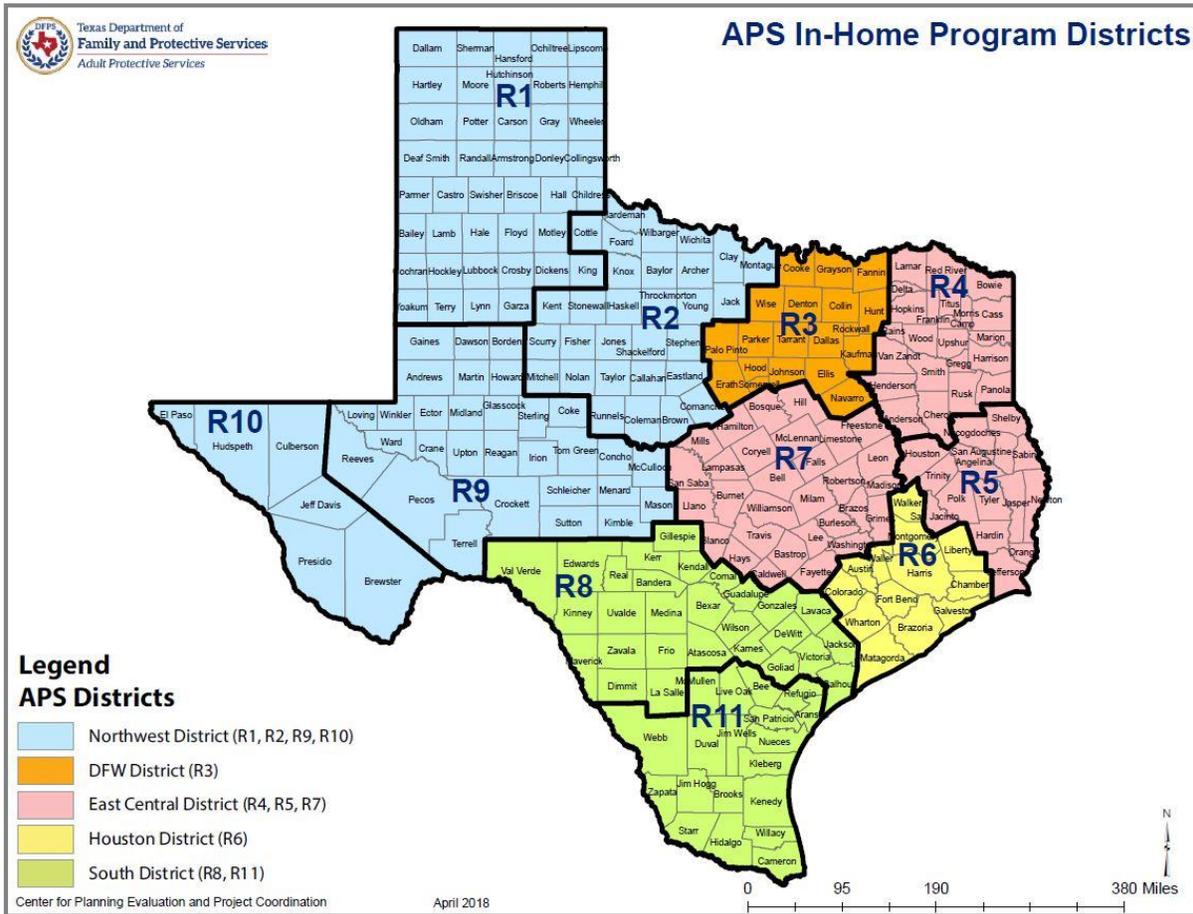
The APS program investigates reported allegations of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect), and financial exploitation. When maltreatment or self-neglect is validated, APS assesses the risk of recurrence of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. Based on the victim's degree of risk, needs, and resources, APS may provide or arrange for a broad range of services to alleviate abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. APS clients may get short-term help with shelter, minor home repairs, food, medication, transportation, home cleaning, restoration of utilities, money management, medical or mental health assessments, or services including referrals to HHSC Guardianship Program, or other legal intervention.

Administration

APS in Texas is organized into five Districts, which are comprised of 11 Regions (see **Figure 1** below). This structure supports efficient administration, equalized support for staff throughout the state, and effective delivery of services to clients with the program resources available.

- Houston District (Houston and surrounding counties)
- Dallas/Fort Worth District (Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding counties)
- North West District (Four regions that include Lubbock, Midland, Abilene, El Paso, and multiple rural areas in North West Texas)
- East Central District (Three regions that include Beaumont, Tyler, much of east Texas, and Austin and surrounding counties)
- South District (Two regions that include San Antonio and surrounding counties, Corpus Christi area, and the Rio Grande Valley and surrounding counties)

Figure 1: APS In-Home Program Districts and Regions



Program Need

A review of several key statistics on the APS program shown in **Table 1** help describe the need for APS services in the state.

Table 1: Selected APS Statistics FY 2012 - FY 2017¹

Program Need	FY 2012	FY 2017	% Change FY 12 to FY 17
Texas population 65+ ²	2,817,979	3,512,243	+24.6%
Texas population 18-64 w/a disability ²	1,626,038	1,788,060	+10%
Combined Texas population served by APS	4,444,017	5,300,303	19.3%
APS intakes ³	107,203	114,305	+6.6%
Clients who had an investigation close, then a new investigation open in the same year ("recidivist" clients) ⁴	13,167	14,865	+12.9%
<i>Recidivist clients as a % of clients with an investigation open at any time during the year</i> ⁴	15.8%	16.0%	+0.9%

Investigations	FY 2012	FY2017	% Change FY 12 to FY 17
Investigations completed (total alleged victims) ⁴	87,487	84,712	-3.2%
Validated Victims ⁵	59,589	51,314	-13.9%
Validation rate (<i>validated victims as a % of total alleged victims</i>)	68.1%	60.6%	-11.0%

¹ Data source for all statistics in table, unless otherwise noted: DFPS Online Data Book, APS section: [APS Section of DFPS Data Book](#).

² [Eligible TX APS Population](#).

³ [APS In-Home Intakes](#) Total Intakes includes intakes with unknown victim age/disability status information.

⁴ [APS Investigations completed](#), and [Total Alleged Victims](#)

⁵ [Validated Victims](#)

Services	FY 2012	FY 2017	% Change FY 12 to FY 17
Clients with a service stage that closed ¹	44,589	36,999	NA ³
<i>Clients with a service stage that closed as a % of clients with an investigation</i>	53.6%	44%	NA
Purchased client services funds used ²	\$8,852,279	\$9,004,055	+1.7%

Staffing	FY 2012	FY 2017	% Change FY 12 to FY 17
Caseworkers ³	542	493	-9.0%
Average daily caseload ⁴	29.6	33.8	+14.2%
Caseworker turnover ⁵	18.4%	27.1%	+47.0%

Population: The number of Texans age 65 and older increased nearly 25% between FY 2012 and FY 2017, and numbered over 3.5 million as of FY 2017. The population of adults age 18 to 64 with disabilities also increased over the 5 year period, but at a slower rate of 10%. The combined population of those 65 and older and adults 18 to 64 with disabilities represented 5.3 million Texans as of 2017, a 19.3% increase over the previous five years (since FY 2012). This combined population increased 4% alone in one year, from FY 2016 to FY 2017:

Annual Increase FY 2016-2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	% Change
Texas population 65+	3,365,237	3,512,243	+4.4%
Texas population 18-64 w/a disability	1,731,877	1,788,060	+3.2%
Total Texas population served by APS	5,097,114	5,300,303	+4.0%

¹ [APS Service Stage Closed](#). Counts of service stages for FY 2015 and later years cannot be compared to counts from prior years due to changes in IMPACT.

² 2012 DFPS Annual Report: [APS Expenditures in Annual Report](#): For 2016 and 2017 numbers, "Projected Expenditures" from August FY-Year end of Monthly Financial Reports, at [Monthly Financial Reports](#).

³ [APS In-Home Staff Demographics](#)

⁴ [APS In-Home Average Daily Caseload](#)

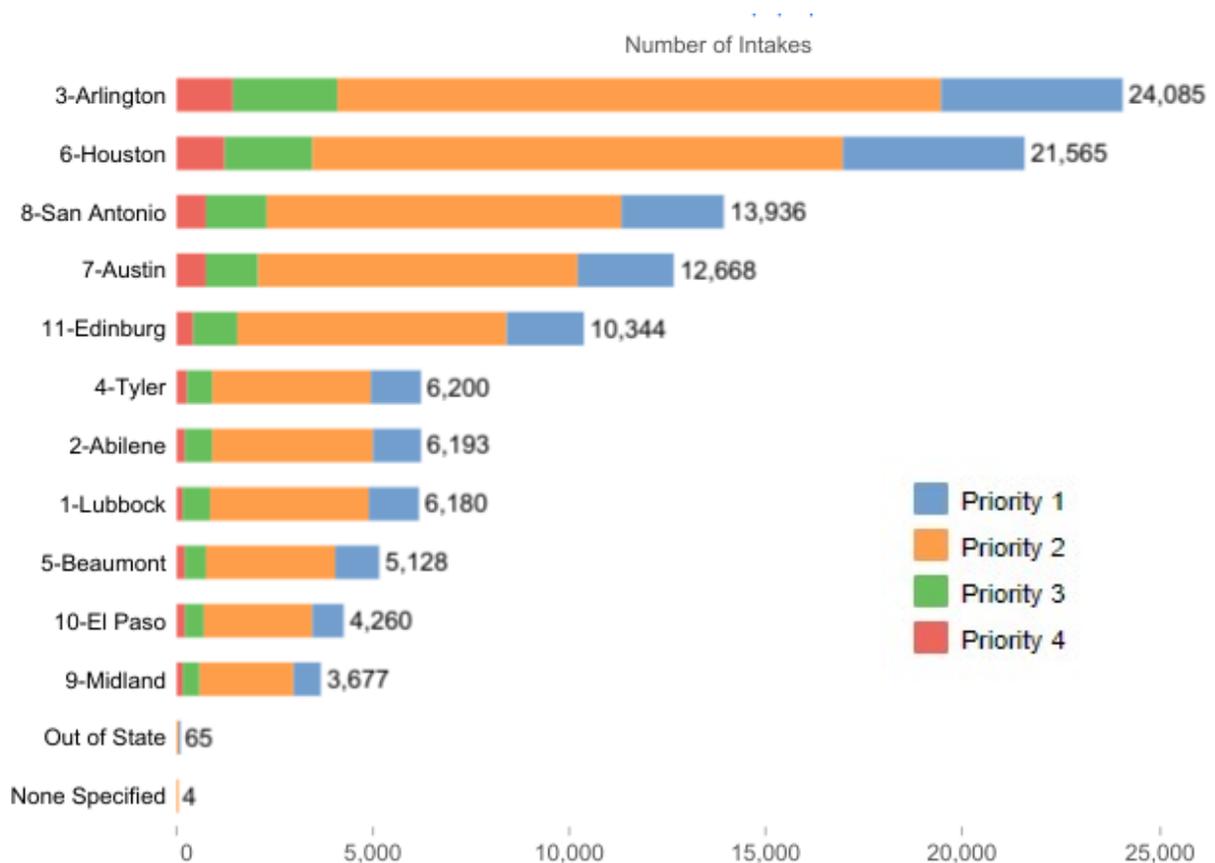
⁵ [APS In-Home Staff Turnover](#)

Intakes: From FY 2012 to FY 2017, intakes to the APS program increased by 6.6%, a much slower rate of growth than the 19.3% increase in the population served over the same period. However, within the most recent one year between FY 2016 and FY 2017, the rate of growth in intakes (3.1%) was more similar to that of the APS target population (4.0%):

Annual Increase FY 2016-2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	% Change
Total Texas population served by APS	5,097,114	5,300,303	+4.0%
APS intakes	107,203	114,305	+3.1%

The number of intakes varies widely across the state, reflecting relative size of populations. **Figure 2** shows the distribution of intakes across the state by region, subdivided by priority level.

Figure 2: APS In-Home Intakes, FY 2017



The percentage distribution of priority levels is highly similar across the regions. The great majority of intakes are either Priority 1 (20%) or Priority 2 (64%).

Recidivism: APS identifies recidivistic cases as those in which an alleged victim becomes involved in more than one new investigation within a 12 month period. Of alleged victims with at least one investigation occurring during a fiscal year, the percentage who had an investigation close and subsequently a new investigation open in the same fiscal year, has generally ranged between 15% and 16% over the past decade. This recidivism rate was 16.0% in FY 2017, a similar percentage to what it was in FY 2012 (15.8%), five years earlier.¹ This relative stability in the recidivism rate reflects the persistent need of many APS clientele and continues to be a contributor to the demand for APS services.

Investigations: While both the demographic population served by APS and APS intakes increased from FY 2012 to FY 2017, the number of investigations completed by APS in a year decreased by 3.2% overall during the same period. However, historically there is substantial change from year to year, reflecting staffing level changes that influence capacity to complete investigations timely. Also, changes to the APS definition of disability during the past 5 year period changed screening of cases accepted for investigation.

The number of validated victims and the validation rate for investigations completed also declined from FY 2012 to 2017. As of FY 2017, the validation rate was 60.6%, 11 percentage points lower than it had been five year previously (68.1% in FY 2012).

From FY 2012 to FY 2017, increases in the state population served by APS (19%) and intakes (7%) on the one hand, and decreases in investigations completed (3%) and validation rate (11%) on the other, are related to a decline in caseworkers (9%) over the same period.

Services: In FY 2016, 36,999 clients received some type of service, as indicated by a separate service stage. Some clients may have received services during their investigation without a separate service stage. Because of changes in the APS case management system (IMPACT), counts for services available for 2015 and later years cannot be compared to those of prior years. However, since 2015 there has been a steady increase in the number of clients with a service stage:

¹ [APS Recidivism](#)

FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
29,159	35,128	36,199

Program Resources

Below is a fiscal overview for FY 2017 summarizing APS expenditures associated with the investigations and services to clients delivered by active staff.

Figure 3: APS In-Home Fiscal Overview, FY 2017



Data source: DFPS Online Data Book:

- ¹ [APS In-Home Staff Demographics](#)
- ² [APS In-Home Entry Salaries and Expenditures for FY17.](#)
- ³ [APS Expenditures for FY17.](#)

As noted previously, while in the five years between 2012 and 2017 there have been substantial increases in the Texas population served by the APS program (19%) and intakes to the program (7%), the number of caseworkers has decreased (by 9%).

Alongside this caseworker decrease, the average daily caseload has increased by 14%, and turnover has increased by 47%. As of 2017, with 493 APS caseworkers, the average daily caseload was 33.8, as compared to 29.6 in 2012 (a 14.2% increase). There has been no comprehensive nationwide study to determine what a workable average daily caseload should be for adult protective service caseworkers, therefore there is no national standard.

Turnover in 2017 was 27.1% for caseworkers, in comparison to 18.4% in 2012, an increase of 47.3%. In FY 2017, a portion of turnover was due to staff migrating from APS to CPS for additional pay. As well as private sector employment that offers a significantly higher pay for a

similar position. **The change in caseworker levels, caseloads, and turnover in just the one year between FY 2016 and FY 2017 has been substantial:**

Staffing	FY 2016	FY 2017	% Change
Caseworkers	525	493	-6.3%
Average daily caseload	31.4	33.8	+7.6%
Caseworker turnover	20.9%	27.1%	+29.7%

Training and Development

Training for APS uses blended learning which combines computer based training, hands on learning, and classroom time. New caseworkers are provided with comprehensive training, allowing them to handle a limited caseload within a few months of hire and a full caseload a month after that. In addition, DFPS provides new APS caseworkers with ongoing opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge through regional trainings, the annual APS conference, and ad hoc development trainings to address specific needs.

Coordination with Partners

APS coordinates with many state and local partners to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. To conduct investigations and provide protective services, APS caseworkers coordinate with law enforcement and the judicial system, forensic injury assessment partners, medical and mental health care and assessment providers, residential and home care service providers, and the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Guardianship Services, among others.

Public and Partner Education

APS conducts public awareness campaigns, including the ongoing "It's Everyone's Business" (www.everyonesbusiness.org), Elder Abuse Prevention (or Awareness) Month in May, "If It's Not Your Money, It's A Crime" in October, and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June. APS community engagement staff inform and educate the public and partner organizations with local workshops, trainings, and conferences. Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services nonprofit and local volunteer boards and coalitions around the state assist in awareness-raising activities, fundraising, and resource development for supplies and other assistance to APS clients and organize APS staff recognition and appreciation events.

Mission, Vision, and Values

APS developed its mission, vision, and core values to reflect and help guide APS services, organization, and management. Protecting older adults and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation is our vision and our main goal.

SWOT Analysis

To help evaluate the current effectiveness of APS and continue to implement the strategic plan, APS conducted an analysis of the division's strengths and weaknesses in 2018. The strengths and weaknesses analysis complimented the "*Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats*" (SWOT) analysis conducted in 2017. The SWOT framework helps organizations identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats to achieving its goals. The strengths and weaknesses updates were conducted to support an ongoing analysis of APS. Additionally, opportunities and threats were reviewed and discussed by APS leaderships (District Directors, State Office Management, and the Associate Commissioner) to further inform a review of APS as a division. The SWOT analysis and complementary reviews were designed to refine organizational strategies and objectives toward strategic plan goals.

The objective for this analysis was to develop information and insights that will help APS to:
Identify and understand issues affecting APS caseworkers

- Set or reaffirm APS strategic goals
- Identify the issues or problems APS intends to change
- Create an action plan to guide APS efforts over the next 5 years

An anonymous survey collecting data on APS strengths and weaknesses was conducted in August 2018 and sent out to all APS staff across the state. The survey gathered respondent perceptions and ideas on APS' current strengths, weakness. The survey had 214 respondents, which is high enough to suggest the results are representative of the views of the target population surveyed.

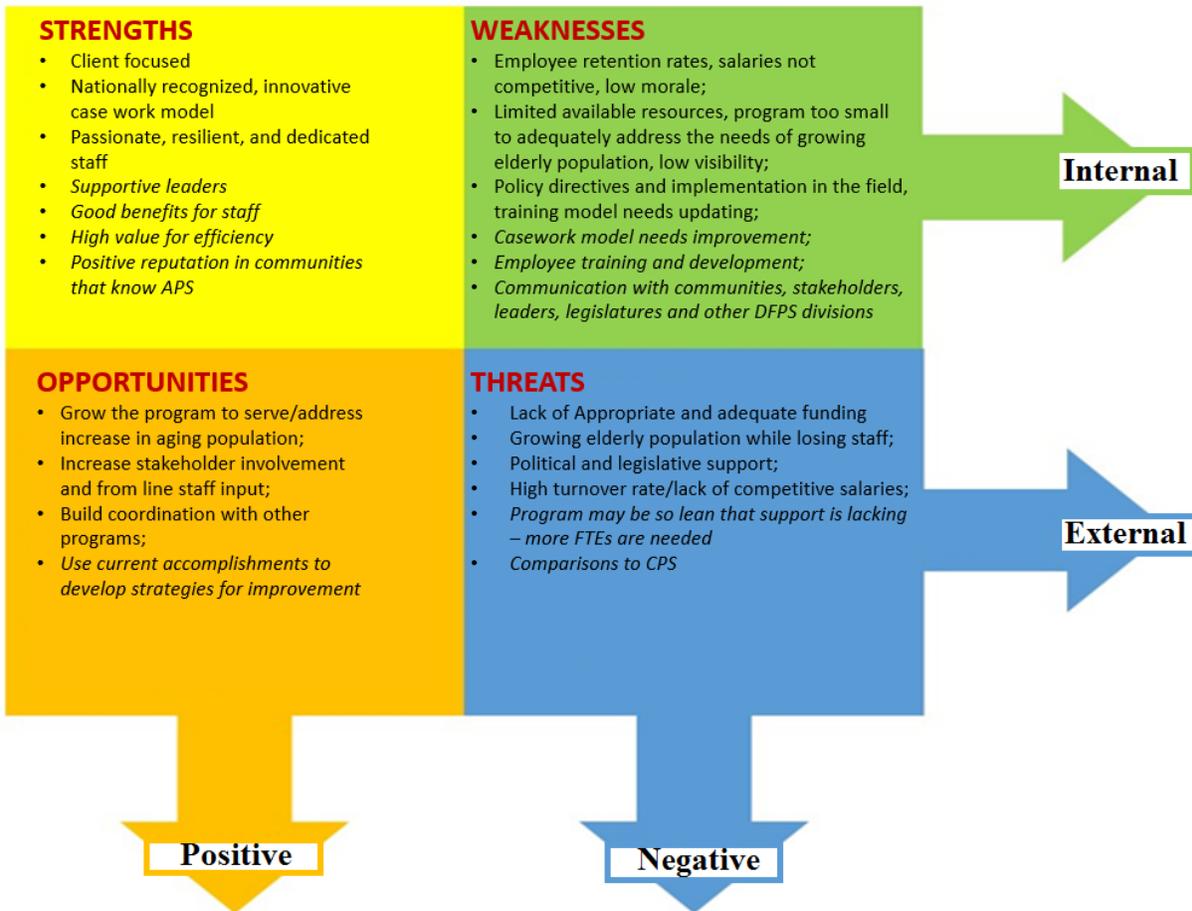
The survey results were summarized in aggregate form and reviewed and analyzed by APS District Directors and State Office leadership during a strategic planning meeting in September 2018. Prior to the strategic planning meeting, the survey results were reviewed by APS Program Administrators, and comments were shared during the meeting. High level themes identified in the survey results and the review session are summarized in italics in the figure (**APS 2018 SWOT Themes**) and discussed in the following pages.

After the survey results were organized into categories, APS leadership engaged in a planning meeting to identify accomplishments and to refine the objectives and strategies according to changes and accomplishments in the past year. Opportunities and threats were shortly reviewed but remained the same from the previous year – additional notes were not developed for opportunities and threats.

The goals were refined and will more than likely not be changed for the remainder of the 5 year plan. However, objectives and strategies will change as they are accomplished and as new challenges to goal accomplishment arise.

Results of the 2018 all-staff survey added to our understanding of APS' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, a review of progress since our first strategic plan has highlighted new insights and lessons that inform our current strategic plan. What follows is a summary of our updated analysis, reflecting on what we have learned in the past year, and will help APS leadership develop and implement plans to execute strategies in the upcoming FY 2019.

APS 2018 SWOT Themes



What are Strengths of the APS In-Home Program?

Strengths are internal characteristics that are unique, special, highly valued, and positive. Something we can control. Many SWOT comments submitted for 2017 and 2018 reflected pride in APS' mission, our staff, and national reputation. In 2018, four new strengths were recognized as reflected in italics above.

- Client focused
- Nationally recognized, innovative case work model
- Passionate, resilient, and dedicated staff
- Supportive leaders
- Good benefits for staff
- The division highly values efficiency
- APS has a positive reputation among communities that know APS services

Results of the 2018 staff survey support the view that among APS’ greatest strengths are its passionate, resilient, dedicated staff and a client focus. Of 18 different statements about the program, staff agreement was highest for the following five items:

	Percent of staff agreement:
I am proud to work for APS.	88%
APS staff are dedicated to the APS mission.	87%
APS is focused on its clients.	88%
APS staff are resilient.	86%
APS staff are passionate.	81%

Although the level of agreement was not quite as high as for the above items, a majority of staff also agreed that APS has an innovative casework practice model (69%).

STRENGTH COMMENT: “I have worked for APS for 10 years and have an advanced degree/license and could find a better paying job anywhere else, but I stay with APS because I believe in our mission and caseworkers.”

What are weaknesses that the APS In-Home Program faces?

Weaknesses are internal challenges that we can control, which limit APS from achieving our mission and goals. Many of this year’s observations regarding APS weaknesses remained focused on resource challenges, program visibility, policy implementation, and training. Three weaknesses that were prevalent in comments among APS staff this year were improvements needed to the casework model, employee training and development needs, and APS stakeholder communication needs. Pay was the highest concern among survey open-ended responses. Currently, there are six categories for weaknesses:

- High turnover rate; salaries not competitive- low morale
- Limited available resources; program too small to adequately address needs of growing population- low visibility
- Policy directives and implementation in the field; training model needs updating
- Casework model needs improvement
- Employee training and development
- Communication with communities, stakeholders, leaders, legislatures and other DFPS divisions

As with APS strengths above, results of the 2018 staff survey support what had been defined in the 2017 survey in areas where APS is facing the most difficulty. In the 2018 survey, staff were concerned with salaries and morale, with 90% disagreeing that salaries are competitive and half of staff disagreeing that morale is positive. Community resources and visibility, along with the APS training model, are also top concerns:

	Percent of staff disagreement:
APS salaries are competitive with similar jobs.	90%
APS staff morale is positive.	50%
Community resources are sufficient for APS clients.	43%
The model APS uses to train new staff meets program needs.	32%
My workload is manageable.	40%
APS is visible to relevant stakeholders.	21%

WEAKNESS COMMENT: “APS is a great program, but suffers due to low pay for frontline staff and resulting turnover.”

What are Opportunities for APS In-Home Program?

Opportunities are external situations/things that may provide “opportunities” for growth and improved service. Although we cannot control them and they may be time sensitive, opportunities inform leaders on circumstances that make action possible. Opportunities allow leaders to consider ways to leverage existing structures for support to the division. Various SWOT comments in the 2017 survey highlighted opportunities for APS to take greater advantage of population trends, stakeholder relationships, and the knowledge of front-line staff. The results of the previous SWOT were considered in the most recent 2018 APS strategic planning meeting and were discussed among leadership:

- Expand program to reflect growth in elderly population
- Increase stakeholder involvement and front line staff input
- Build coordination among other programs

OPPORTUNITY COMMENT 2017: “Explore ways to educate/inform (stakeholders) about the graying tsunami in Texas, the related role of APS, and the need to provide adequate resources to this program.”

What Threats Face The APS In-Home Program?

Threats are external situations/things that may challenge our ability to impact change. We cannot control them, but hope to avoid them or lessen their impact. Commonly identified concerns from the SWOT analysis contrasted the size APS funding and staff relative to the needs of the population served.

- Lack of appropriate and adequate funding
- Growing elderly population while losing staff
- Lack of political and legislative awareness
- High turnover rate/lack of competitive salaries

THREAT COMMENT 2017: “Other organizations attract quality staff from us because of salaries and lack of recognition.”

SWOT and the Strategic Plan

During the SWOT review at the APS Strategic Planning Meeting, participants identified implications of SWOT findings for enhancing agency goals, objectives, and strategies. During the course of the discussion, priority topics and strategies were identified for how APS can capitalize on program strengths, overcome program weaknesses, develop opportunities, and counter threats to the program.

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Accomplishments

In the strategic planning workshop held September 2018, APS leadership discussed accomplishments that were achieved from September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018. When these accomplishments were reviewed along with challenges and goals, leaders were able to gain a better understanding of the skill sets and effective processes that already exist within APS. The insights below can be used as a directory of internal resources throughout the process of implementing strategic plan goals for the upcoming fiscal year.

Major accomplishments include the following:

- APS received the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Collaboration Award.
- The APS state office team established and maintained a cohesive team oriented culture.
- APS leadership began holding monthly briefings with the DFPS Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Chief of Staff to enhance internal awareness of APS accomplishments, challenges, and program needs.
- The Performance Team developed and implemented a new approach to quality assurance that has been more effective for APS.
- The Program Support Team developed a quarterly interim legislative newsletter that is distributed to APS staff statewide.
- The Northwest District comprised of region 1, 2, 9, and 10 hosted largest APS conference in the state of Texas with more than 600 participants.
- The Dallas/ Fort Worth District comprised of region 3 implemented an exploitation clinic in Tarrant County to address the urgent concern of exploitation crimes against elder adults.
- The East Central District comprised of regions 4, 5, and 7 developed successful strategies to address critical issues such as high caseloads and staff shortages affecting the district.
- The Houston District comprised of region 6 ensured APS participation in a Crime Stoppers Press Conference and Disaster Preparedness Conference.
- The South District comprised of regions 8 and 11 improved safety and services contracts district wide.
- Policy Development team developed policies, procedures, and a handbook for the newly created APS mentor pilot program.

Effective Practices

The accomplishments were used to create a list of effective practices among APS staff. The list serves as a guide for strategy development as it highlights how APS is able to achieve goals.

1. Consider APS staff a resource for improvement and implementation
 - Soliciting APS staff participation in projects and programs. Staff respond well to inclusion, teamwork, and appreciation.
 - Integrating teams and finding a uniform approach.

- Working with staff to directly address needs.
2. Take time to understand issues and to develop processes for implementing solutions
 - Assessing needs for each project or new operation.
 - Creating structured processes for projects and operations. This includes developing work plans, developing steps, and considering all aspects of a project.
 - Identifying areas for efficiency and use of technology.
 3. Communicate needs to stakeholders and involve them in solutions
 - Ensuring stakeholder involvement.
 - Prioritizing a need for communication.
 - Being responsive and managing shortcomings to be transparent (messaging shortcomings).
 - Supporting community engagement for conference development.

Objectives and Strategies Achieved

In FY 2017-2018, APS staff achieved all of the strategies toward the first goal and first objective. The first goal was for Client Outcomes to improve practices and processes for better client outcomes, while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness. The first objective was to address CLEAR workgroup's efficient and streamlined recommendations to contribute to better client outcomes by FY 2020. APS achieved all four strategies under this goal and objective:

- **Strategy 1.1.1:** Release the CLEAR workgroup report with recommendations to APS statewide.
- **Strategy 1.1.2:** Evaluate and re-charter the CLEAR and Intensive Case Services work group to monitor and coordinate progress, an audience for policy changes, and vetting mechanism for on-going changes.
- **Strategy 1.1.3:** Document the impact of workers and supervisors not following protocol.
- **Strategy 1.1.4** Reinforce and identify existing policies that allow for efficient and productive casework.

APS also achieved part of the third goal, which is about strengthening an environment that facilitates teamwork and communication around the APS mission and vision. APS was able to accomplish objective 3.1 enhancing the relationship between state office and the field by 2020. APS achieved one strategy under this goal and objective:

- **Strategy 3.1.1:** Assess the relationship between state office and the field using a staff survey on communication and teamwork across APS.

Strategic Plan

Following the strategic planning meeting, state office staff utilized repeated themes in the surveys, review meetings, and other discussions throughout the strategic planning process to draft the FY 2019 APS strategic plan. The first day of the strategic planning meeting included a discussion of the common current issues in regions with District Directors and State Office management staff. There also was an analysis of the statewide strengths and weaknesses survey on the first day that spurred several relevant conversations. Leadership identified overarching themes as a group and agreed to pursue adding some objectives and strategies under existing goals. The next days of the meeting were devoted to modifying and developing new objectives and strategies to achieve the current goals.

The new FY 2019 APS Strategic Plan reformulates APS goals, objectives, and strategies to reflect current conditions and priorities. The theme of the strategic plan is to work together as a unified team to achieve efficient quality casework, leading to better client outcomes. APS realizes that the program's goals are large and will require several years to achieve.

Four Goals have been established which are responsive to these recognized priorities. Goal 1 targets client outcomes. Goal 2 relates to statewide practice and program needs and implementing improvements. Goal 3 is about fostering teamwork within APS. Goal 4 is focused on APS relations with internal and external stakeholders, to promote APS to increase awareness, advocacy and support. All four goals relate to one another by cultivating collaboration within APS and communicating our vision.

Goal 1 Client Outcomes

Goal 1 is about enhancing and leveraging practices for better client outcomes, while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness. This goal is focused on clients and client outcomes.

APS created the Casework, Logical, Efficient, and Responsible (CLEAR) workgroup in 2017 to review policy, practice, and rule to identify efficiencies and areas of improvement. APS is identifying practices that can be streamlined or improved, and if necessary, APS is eliminating requirements and tasks that do not contribute to better client outcomes.

The first objective is to address the CLEAR workgroup's recommendations to improve efficiency without negatively impacting effectiveness. APS will release the CLEAR report and use it as a road map to make low or no cost changes. In FY 2018 the CLEAR workgroup decided to reconvene to work on an implementation plan and a strategy to communicate progress to all staff. Objective 1.3 was created as a result of the excellent work of Objective 1.1 has accomplished and assessed.

Objective 1.3 focuses on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the APS casework practice model as a whole to improve efficient and consistent casework practice. This new objective was created to evaluate the current APS casework practice model for current and future workforce needs and implement those changes in the long-term future. It will evaluate how to manage APS with existing resources, assess other state's models, take into consideration timing, complete a risk analysis, and determine the correct model APS needs.

Another objective under this goal is focused on identifying and promoting efficient and coordinated casework best practices across the state. APS will utilize the existing regional Process Improvement Committee (PIC) as an avenue to solicit feedback and information on things that are working within the region. This feedback will be brought back to the State PIC in Austin for evaluation and dissemination through district PICs from across the state.

The last new section of this goal is Objective 1.4, which focuses on APS taking an in depth look into the APS caseload, specifically how many cases a caseworker should maintain at one time. Since there is no national standard number indicating what an adult protective services caseload should be nor is there a reliable or recent study APS will look into avenues to complete a study.

Goal 2 Workforce

Goal 2 focuses on empowering APS staff to become highly trained, practiced, and motivated. This goal concentrates on caseworker needs and casework practice.

This goal centers on recognizing and rewarding exceptional casework across the state, as well as exploring and implementing best casework practices, and developing and maintaining efficient fieldwork processes across the state. APS staff will be empowered by proactively recognizing exceptional performance across the state, and promoting those best practices.

An additional APS objective is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current workforce practices to promote competency, resiliency, and retention efforts. This includes reevaluating our training to ensure it meets current workforce needs. APS caseworkers are mobile and supervisors are managing multiple workers across the regions and districts. The APS program is changing and the workforce is changing; training must adapt as well.

During the FY 2019 strategic planning meeting there was a focus on recruitment efforts, APS leadership stressed a need to look at recruiting top candidates for positions across the state and maintaining those positions. The newest topic of discussion was about succession planning. APS leadership agreed collectively that succession planning should be in everyone's mind when making decisions and when managing their area.

Lastly, APS will reevaluate our current positions to make sure staff are well suited to respond to the needs of our clients. This goal ultimately focuses on the success of the APS program to train, retain, and empower our APS staff.

Goal 3 Teamwork

Goal 3 is about strengthening an environment that facilitates teamwork and communication around the APS mission and vision.

Objective 3.1 is about strengthening the relationship between state office and field staff by working together and fostering communication. The team assigned to complete objective 3.1 completed a statewide survey on APS teamwork. They received excellent feedback and completed a full analysis to guide their work on completing the additional strategies.

APS under the teamwork goal also conducted a statewide strengths and weaknesses survey and invited every APS employee to participate and offer feedback. After analyzing the results, APS assessed which areas the agency needs to focus on in order to promote statewide participation. The goal of feedback is to cultivate a collaborative and productive environment between all APS employees.

Promoting respectful camaraderie among APS staff, and strengthening an environment that facilitates teamwork is a priority. APS will identify what districts do to promote cooperation and recognition, leverage useful best practices and develop resources that can be replicated across the state. Districts working together, as we have seen during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, is what makes APS excel at developing strong staff teams and providing our clients with the services they need. Opportunities for districts to build relationships with other districts will also be pursued in order to further foster a collaborative environment.

Another objective under this goal focuses on increasing APS influence and contribution at DFPS. APS will challenge itself to build relationship with programs and departments at DFPS and seek opportunities for executive involvement by positioning ourselves for visibility. APS also will promote APS efforts that may be of interest to other programs.

The last objective under this goal is a newly added objective 3.4. This objective is about building and strengthening APS operations within the agency by assessing APS operational strengths and needs. It will focus on increasing budget/finance knowledge and awareness across APS to build internal capacity for strategic management. As well as, developing and implementing processes to monitor operating budgets including PCS expenditures.

Goal 4: Partnerships

Goal 4 addresses internal and external APS stakeholder relations, including the public, agency staff, partner agencies and organizations, the legislature, and others. Promote APS to increase awareness, advocacy and support

The program would like to promote APS and increase external awareness, advocacy and support of our clients. This goal is centered on empowering all APS staff to promote the APS In-Home program across the state.

The growth of the population served by APS, alongside financial needs of the program call for increased efforts to raise awareness of the APS program, our mission, populations served, and their needs. APS will develop a communication plan that creates a unified message to our

internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the communication plan will focus on outreach efforts to increase awareness and reporting of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

To further that objective, APS will foster internal skills through the creation of a statewide APS Ambassador program. The purpose of an APS Ambassador program is to elevate staff, and allow them to have the flexibility and confidence to promote the agency and mission. These Ambassadors will have training to ensure a unified message across the state and within APS. This will include training for staff in the field who routinely have contact with external stakeholders.

Another objective under this goal is to address the protective service needs of the growing population by maximizing existing and new resources, for example exploring Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding or grants for exploitation. This includes an assessment to evaluate the needs of the elder population and creating a comprehensive Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) based on the results. Along with working with internal and external stakeholders and promoting ourselves, comes asking for the services and resources needed to protect the vulnerable adults of Texas.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1 Client Outcomes

Improve practices and processes for better client outcomes, while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness.

Objective 1.1: Address CLEAR workgroup's efficient and streamlined recommendations to contribute to better client outcomes by FY 2020. *Achieved*

Strategy 1.1.1: Release the CLEAR workgroup report with recommendations to APS statewide. *Achieved and Completed*

Strategy 1.1.2: Evaluate and re-charter the CLEAR and Intensive Case Services work group to monitor and coordinate progress, an audience for policy changes, and vetting mechanism for on-going changes. *Achieved*

Strategy 1.1.3: Document the impact of workers and supervisors not following protocol. *Achieved*

Strategy 1.1.4 Reinforce and identify existing policies that allow for efficient and productive casework. *Achieved*

Objective 1.2: Identify and promote efficient and coordinated casework best practices across the state by FY 2022.

Strategy 1.2.1: Re-charter the PIC with a focus on promoting best casework practices.

Strategy 1.2.2: Identify district best practices statewide, and champions within districts by recognizing their efforts, with an emphasis on those who can teach others statewide.

Strategy 1.2.3: Establish the PIC as the lead to develop content and speakers of the annual APS conference.

Strategy 1.2.4: Develop a plan for the PIC to disseminate the results and recommendations statewide.

Objective 1.3: Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the APS casework practice model to promote efficient and consistent casework practice by FY 2021.

Strategy 1.1.3: Evaluate the APS casework practice model for current and future workforce needs.

Strategy 1.3.2: Assess the external resources needed to complete changes to the APS casework practice model regarding: IT, rule changes, MRS resources, policy, etc.

Strategy 1.3.3: Develop a long term casework practice transformation implementation plan.

Strategy 1.3.4: Implement changes needed to begin at the start of FY 2022, such as IT and rule changes, etc.

Objective 1.4: Explore opportunities to define an ideal manageable caseload to provide quality services by FY 2022.

Strategy 1.4.1: Complete a literature review on national studies on adult protective caseloads, as part of full needs assessment.

Strategy 1.4.2: Assess the risks and costs of completing the study.

Strategy 1.4.3: Evaluate the need to do a study in-house internally or externally.

Goal 2 Workforce

Empower APS staff to be highly trained, practiced and motivated.

Objective 2.1: Proactively recognize good performance across APS by FY 2020.

Strategy 2.1.1: Assess current recognition programs and opportunities.

Strategy 2.1.2: Design a recognition program that addresses the new unique needs of the APS mobile workforce.

Strategy 2.1.3: Implement the new APS recognition plan.

Objective 2.2: Evaluate the strengths and weakness of current workforce practices to promote competency, resilience, and retention by FY 2022.

Strategy 2.2.1: Assess the training tools available that help caseworkers retain and execute excellent model casework practice.

Strategy 2.2.2: Assess the training model to meet our current workforce needs which includes caseworkers, supervisors, and other APS staff.

Strategy 2.2.3: Evaluate the role of each APS position for functionality and efficiency to match the needs of the program.

Strategy 2.2.4: Implement recommendations to training model.

Strategy 2.2.5: Evaluate APS pilot programs for effectiveness and expansion. Examples: APS Mentorship Program and Immediate Caseworker Productivity Pilot.

Goal 3 Teamwork

Strengthen and facilitate teamwork and communication supporting the APS mission.

Objective 3.1: Enhance the relationship between state office and the field by FY 2020.

Strategy 3.1.1: Assess the relationship between state office and the field using a staff survey on communication and teamwork across APS.

Strategy 3.1.2: Foster a culture focused on collaboration and productivity by providing achievable outcomes.

Strategy 3.1.3: Seek opportunities for the field to provide feedback to the state office.

Objective 3.2: Promote respectful comradery among APS to strengthen an environment that facilitates teamwork by FY 2020.

Strategy 3.2.1: Analyze and assess each district's current practice to promote comradery.

Strategy 3.2.2: Increase and seek opportunities to build relationships between districts.

Strategy 3.2.3: Gather feedback from the regional Process Improvement Committee (PIC) meetings and create a forum at the statewide PIC to promote comradery among districts.

Objective 3.3: Increase APS impact and contribution at DFPS by FY 2021.

Strategy 3.3.1: Build relationships with DFPS programs, such as CPS and operations.

Strategy 3.3.2: Seek opportunities for executive involvement for APS to increase program visibility and impact.

Strategy 3.3.3: Promote APS “best practices” that may be valuable and beneficial to other DFPS programs.

Objective 3.4 Build and strengthen APS operations by 2021.

Strategy 3.4.1: Assess APS operational strengths and needs throughout the DFPS organization.

Strategy 3.4.2: Increase APS operational knowledge and awareness across APS to build internal capacity for strategic management.

Strategy 3.4.3: Develop and implement processes to monitor operating budgets including PCS expenditures.

Goal 4: Partnerships

Promote APS to increase awareness, advocacy and support.

Objective 4.1: Inform stakeholders about ongoing work to increase the awareness of APS top priorities by FY 2020.

Strategy 4.1.1: Assess and evaluate APS communication methods and processes to determine effectiveness. Example: Biennial APS Community Satisfaction Survey.

Strategy 4.1.2: Determine our internal and external stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1.3: Develop a multi-tiered communication plan.

Strategy 4.1.4: Develop a system to deliver pertinent information to internal and external stakeholders.

Objective 4.2: Create a culture of APS ambassadors that promotes our mission and core values by FY 2021.

Strategy 4.2.1: Create a statewide APS Ambassador plan for all APS employees that positively promotes the APS program, both locally and statewide.

Strategy 4.2.2: Develop the training and tools needed for a statewide plan for use by our APS Ambassadors.

Strategy 4.2.3: Create an outreach campaign that encourages responsible elder abuse reporting for the underserved and under reported.

Strategy 4.2.4: Implement the APS Ambassador plan across the state.

Objective 4.3: Address the protective services needs of the growing vulnerable adult population by maximizing existing and new resources by 2023.

Strategy 4.3.1: Evaluate the protective services needs of the growing vulnerable adult population. *Achieved*

Strategy 4.3.2: Develop a comprehensive Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) to address APS workforce needs. *Achieved*

Strategy 4.3.3: Maximize existing and new resource opportunities, for example exploring VOCA funding or grants for exploitation.

Next Steps

In the coming year, APS will build on progress since our last strategic plan, continuing work begun as a result of the initial plan as well as initiating new efforts shaped by what we've learned last year and this year. New staff input obtained this year has added to understanding program strengths and weaknesses and opened up new opportunities for improvement.

This strategic plan is a long-term five year plan with broad goals as well as objectives and strategies designed to achieve those targets. The intent is to make this plan a living document - it will continue to change and become more established as we hone in on identifying our best practices and re-examine our efforts toward achieving our goals on an annual basis. We will meet yearly to reevaluate and give updates on our goals, objectives, and strategies.

APS management is pursuing initiatives in response to knowledge gained during the development of its first two strategic plans. Priorities for program development include Goal 1 Client Outcomes, Goal 2 Workforce, Goal 3 Teamwork, and Goal 4 Partnerships. Goal 1 has a newly added objective that will take a look at our casework practice model to promote efficient and consistent casework. Goal 3 also has a new objective that will assess APS operational strengths and needs throughout the DFPS organization. These and other newly added objectives and strategies will have an important impact on the APS program once completed.

In addition, staff workgroups established last year to focus on particular topic areas will continue their work, plus at least two new workgroups have been started in response to this strategic plan. APS management will do all it can to support progress towards goals. APS staff will continue to be consulted for input and other contributions to initiatives as resources allow, realizing that staff time is as precious as their knowledge and insights.

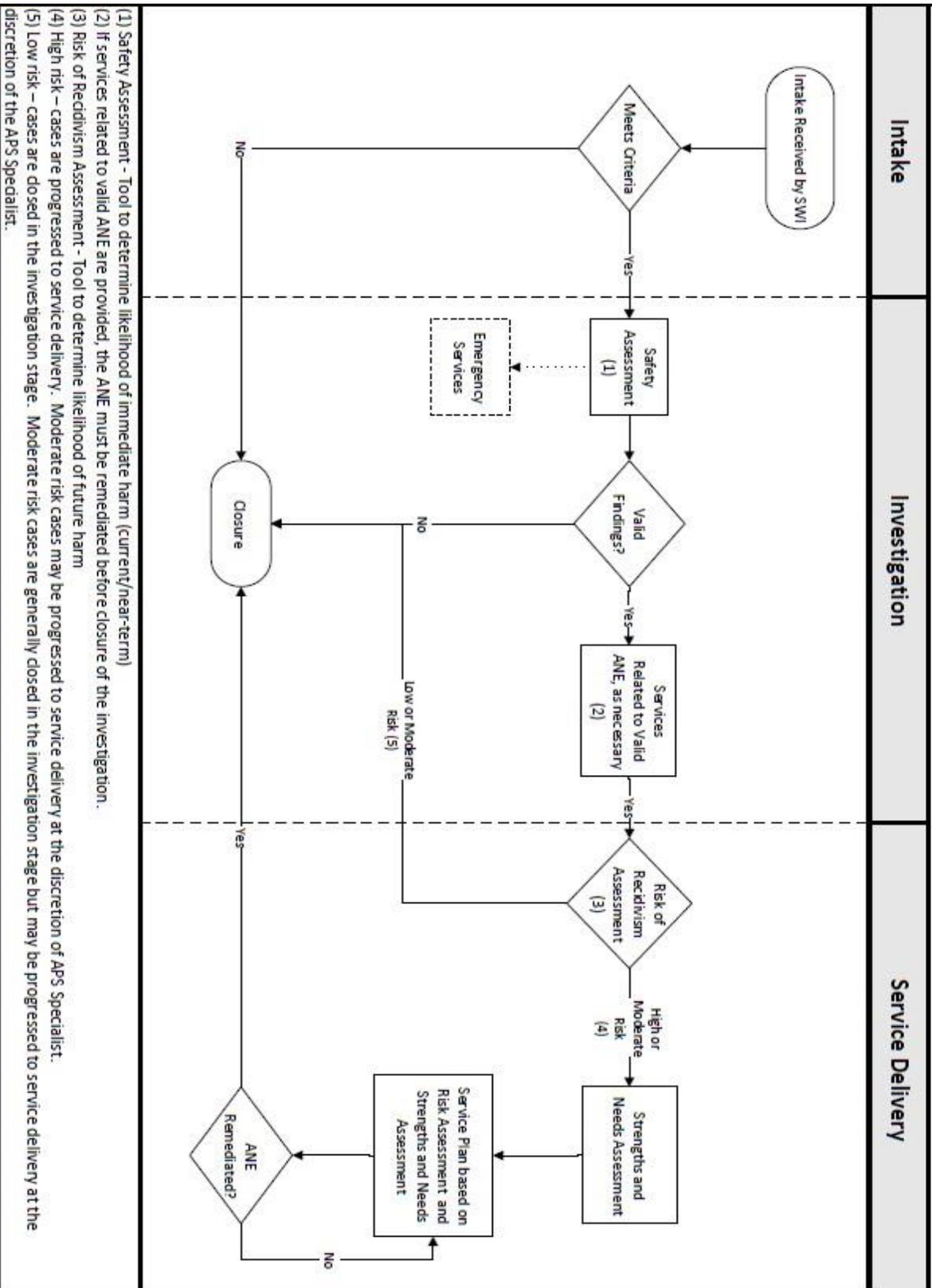
Next year, we will again review our efforts toward achieving our goals, identify accomplishments, and changes in needs and opportunities. Staff will continue to treat this plan as a "living document", used not only to define broad goals and strategies, but also to set short term targets, and celebrate accomplishments. We look to our strategic planning approach as one way to facilitate positive change as APS responds and adapts to new challenges.

This strategic plan will provide a natural transition to a detailed action plan that will to enable the monitoring and refining of our efforts. An action plan template has been created to track progress and implementation at the strategy level. These will be submitted to APS leadership for review quarterly.

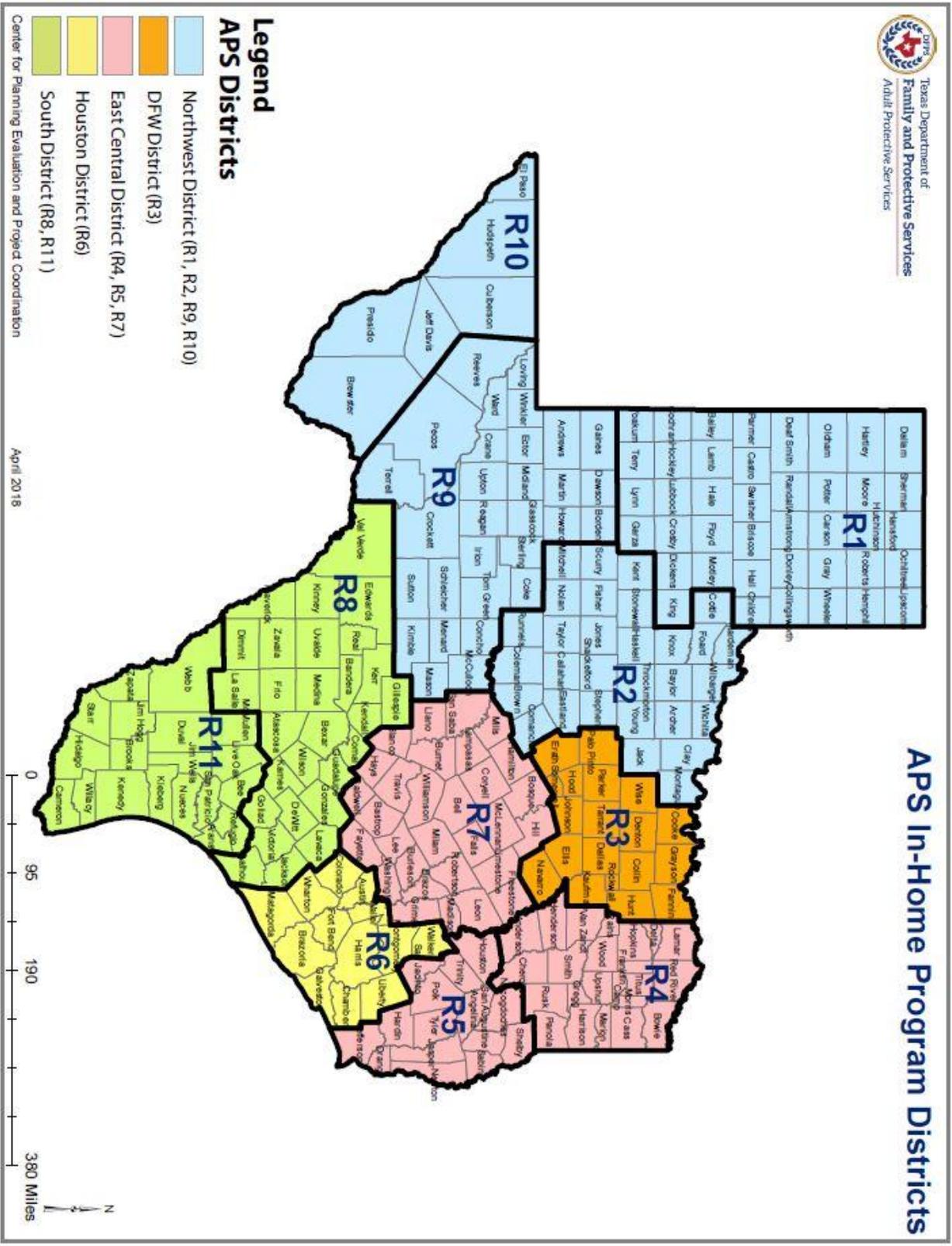
The strategic plan is meant to be a document for everyone at APS, because together we protect our clients. As such, this document will be shared across APS and feedback will be solicited prior to every annual evaluation.

For questions or comments on the APS Strategic Plan, please contact the APS Associate Commissioner, Kezeli Wold at Kezeli.Wold@dfps.state.tx.us.

APS In-Home Casework Process



Appendix 2



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services
Adult Protective Services

APS In-Home Program Districts